

Missouri Training and Employment Council MTEC
Education and Training Committee
Personal Suggestions from Tony Myers MTEC Business Member
8/26/03

The issues we face as stated in several reports are; Literacy, Graduation rates, A+ enrollment, Work readiness and MAP scores.

In my opinion, what I have seen throughout the state in the past 15 years as a Human Resources Manager in Telecommunications, Banking, Manufacturing and now the Medical Industry is very disturbing. It has appeared obvious that the current issues we face did not happen overnight. We must take action now. Someone needs to lead and drive actions in this issue. We cannot continue to lose businesses, employees and potential businesses to other states. This is a competition, as much as everyone wants to cooperate, it is a competitive environment. Should we continue to focus on manufacturing as our main source of employment opportunity and tax base. I understand it is an important part, but we must choose wisely who we focus on in this realm. We also need to identify other prosperous business in the service industries and life sciences. The positive part of this is that the issues listed above are very much interconnected and certain solutions will have a positive impact on all of them.

All of the recommendations provided in the 5/27/03 Committee Report by John Gaal, Gil Kennon and Nancy Headrick will be steps in the right direction on these issues. We must have consistent guidelines for all involved including the involvement and accountability of: State Government, Local business and State funded schools K-16.

We must start learning from the successes of other states around us and have the drive of the State government for guidelines and accountability. I am not suggesting taking all the power from the local areas but they must be lead and in certain situations that means making a mandate. Setting goals with reward and ramification. Don't tell them how to do things, but make it clear the consequences.

MAP, Literacy and Graduation Rates:

The suggestions needed to progress toward improving these very large problems including: unacceptable student MAP scores, literacy and graduation rate is two fold. First: To ensure performance you must set goals, reward success and hold the stakeholders accountable. The first accountability is the teacher. In business each individual is held accountable and pay, promotion opportunities and job security hinge on it. In education I hear words like tenure. The teacher should be held accountable. That accountability is pay for performance. Teachers are paid and given increases in salary based on the amount of education they have. A system that is sometimes called "career ladder". More education does not constitute effectiveness in the classroom. The second accountability is the School systems. Schools are funded by the state, based on

enrollment. They should be held accountable, at least partially in the same way; pay for performance.

Work Readiness

You must have the involvement of the businesses throughout the state when it comes to this issue. All businesses in Missouri do not require a College education. It seems that most High school curriculum is set up for the college bound student. What I have seen is a need for accountability for attendance; improved team skills; communication; simple math skills and a better understanding of operating expenses and profit relating to quality and productivity. The other area in this process is State assistance including Developmental Tax Credits; WIB funds; New Jobs Projects and Customized Training programs. To focus on these programs which train and retrain employees of Missouri companies, including making it a priority to replenish the funding for these programs; rethink how the money is distributed and to whom. These programs are important to many businesses in the state. We need to develop a program to ensure return on investment and that the funds are being distributed to healthy businesses or to those which by having the funding it will ensure profitable growth. It is not corporate charity it is good business.

Credit Transfer

All state funded institutions should be required to develop a system for accepting all credit transfers from other state funded institutions. This would need to be required by the Governors office as was done in the state of Kentucky.

Consolidation of effort:

It is disturbing the number of state funded or partially state funded organizations that are in competition with each other offering the same programs. Example Farmington Schools, Mineral Area College, Area Vocational Tech School etc. We should be working together, not draining the funds and offering the same programs.

In summary I feel we have talked and talked about these issues and have talked even more about solutions. Someone with the authority needed must drive these action plans and not be so concerned with being politically correct or stepping on peoples toes at the local level. We must take action now.

Respectfully

Tony Myers